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MultiFamily NW statement on SB 608

MultiFamily NW was not involved in drafting SB 608 but has released the following statement about the bill.

“Rent control seems like an easy fix to Oregon’s housing crisis. A silver bullet. But the research shows that rent control only offers short-term benefits. Rent control helps renters today but hurts renters in the long run. If this is the path Oregon is choosing, it should be monitored closely to ensure it does not harm renters, rental providers, or the economy,” said Deborah Imse, executive director of MultiFamily NW, which represents individuals, families, and businesses that provide more than 250,000 rental homes throughout Oregon.

We would like to see the following from the Oregon legislature:

- To make housing in Oregon more affordable, we need more from the legislature to address this issue. House Speaker Tina Kotek’s multi-family zoning bill is a good start, but it’s not nearly enough. To lower housing costs, policy makers statewide need to put more attention into increasing supply.
- No other state has implemented statewide rent control. And no other state has enacted a 7 percent increase plus inflation – as measured by the consumer price index. If the state chooses to enact an approach that has never been implemented or tested anywhere else in the nation, it is crucial that the state also measure the impact and report back regularly to determine if investment in rental construction decreases.
- The state should monitor the impact of limiting notices to terminate tenancies (sometimes called “no cause notices”). SB 608 allows termination of a lease for no cause in the first 12 months, but not after. End of tenancy notices help rental providers create safe rental properties by ensuring that people who are harassing other residents can be removed, even if their actions don’t rise to the level of a for-cause eviction. It’s actually a form of tenant protection that serves our most vulnerable populations.
- If this truly is going to be a different kind of rent control in Oregon as some say it is, it’s crucial that lawmakers commit to the 7 percent cap and ensure there is no ratcheting down. How can we ensure that 7 percent doesn’t become 5 percent in the future, or lower? We would like to see lawmakers offer assurances to investors that Oregon is still a smart, predictable place to invest in the rental market. This will support efforts to increase supply.
- Finally, the legislature should be looking at programs that are proven to help renters, such as vouchers, subsidies, and rental assistance. We encourage lawmakers to look at programs like [LIVE Denver](#), a low-income voucher equity program that is a public-private partnership with employers, foundations and the city.

“Oregon lawmakers need to offer the direction and resources necessary to measure the short-term and long-term impacts of rent control and show Oregonians that rent control offers all of the touted benefits, without the drawbacks,” Imse said.

About MultiFamily NW

MultiFamily NW represents individuals, families, and businesses that provide more than 250,000 rental homes throughout Oregon. The organization is focused on helping rental home providers maintain quality housing, and on increasing the supply of rental homes in Oregon. MultiFamily is an independent organization and is not a member of any other housing group, including Oregon Rental Housing Association, Rental Housing Alliance, or More Housing Now.